

Top Secret

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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

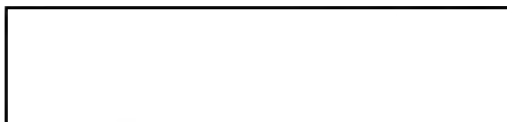
MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

Top Secret

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23 March 1967



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Information as of 1600

23 March 1967

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HIGHLIGHTS

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[redacted] In
Saigon, one of Premier Ky's staunchest military supporters, the important commander of the area surrounding Saigon, is said to be increasingly critical of the Premier's political ambitions.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:

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[redacted] Nearly 1,800 enemy soldiers have been killed thus far by US forces of Operation JUNCTION CITY (Paras. 3-4).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
There are indications of a rift between Premier Ky and one of his staunchest military supporters, III Corps commander General Khang (Paras. 1-3).

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IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.



I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

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2. Many Communist base areas have been uncovered and destroyed during this month-long operation, which has been specifically targeted against such installations as well as against the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) headquarters complex and Viet Cong military units subordinate to COSVN. A total of 114 B-52 strikes have been flown thus far in support of this operation and may account for some of the damage to the enemy bases.

3. As a result of the heavy losses sustained by two Viet Cong main force regiments early this week, over-all Communist casualties in Operation JUNCTION CITY have soared to an all-time high for a single operation--1,772 killed as of 23 March.

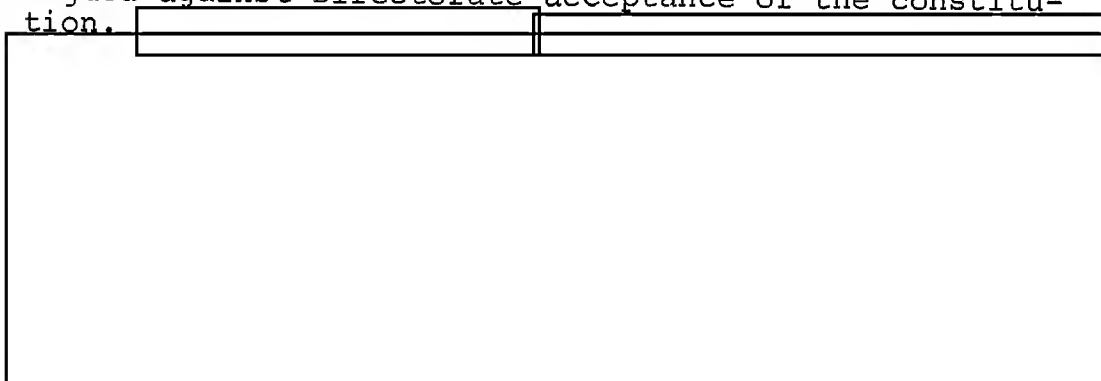
4. In comparison, the four-and-a-half month Operation THAYER in Binh Dinh Province resulted in 1,757 enemy troops killed; the five-month Operation PRAIRIE I in Quang Tri Province ended with 1,397 Communist killed; and the 42-day Operation ATTLEBORO recently concluded in Binh Duong Province reported a total of 1,106 enemy killed.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

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1. There are indications that a rift is beginning to develop between Premier Ky and General Le Nguyen Khang, III Corps commander and one of Ky's staunchest military supporters. Generally, Khang appears concerned that power may be going to Ky's head. The most recent illustration of this occurred on 19 March, after Khang had unsuccessfully argued against Directorate acceptance of the constitution.



2. By commanding troops in the important III Corps area surrounding Saigon and by commanding the Vietnamese Marine Corps which acts as a part of the general reserve, General Khang occupies a key military position, and he apparently fully recognizes this fact. On past occasions, Khang has implied that various military unit commanders were loyal to him as opposed to either Premier Ky or Chief of State Thieu. Khang has on occasion also acted as a spokesman for a loose association of field grade officers known as the "Baby Turks." Khang's past association with and support for Ky appear to have deep roots; both men were born in the same town in North Vietnam and are less than a year apart in age.

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3. It is not clear whether the reported friction between Khang and Ky stems from Ky's ambitions or whether there are more personal factors involved. It is thus difficult to judge how serious the rift might be, or where it will lead. it may well be indicative of growing uneasiness within the military over the apparent conflict between Ky's presidential ambitions and his willingness to protect military interests.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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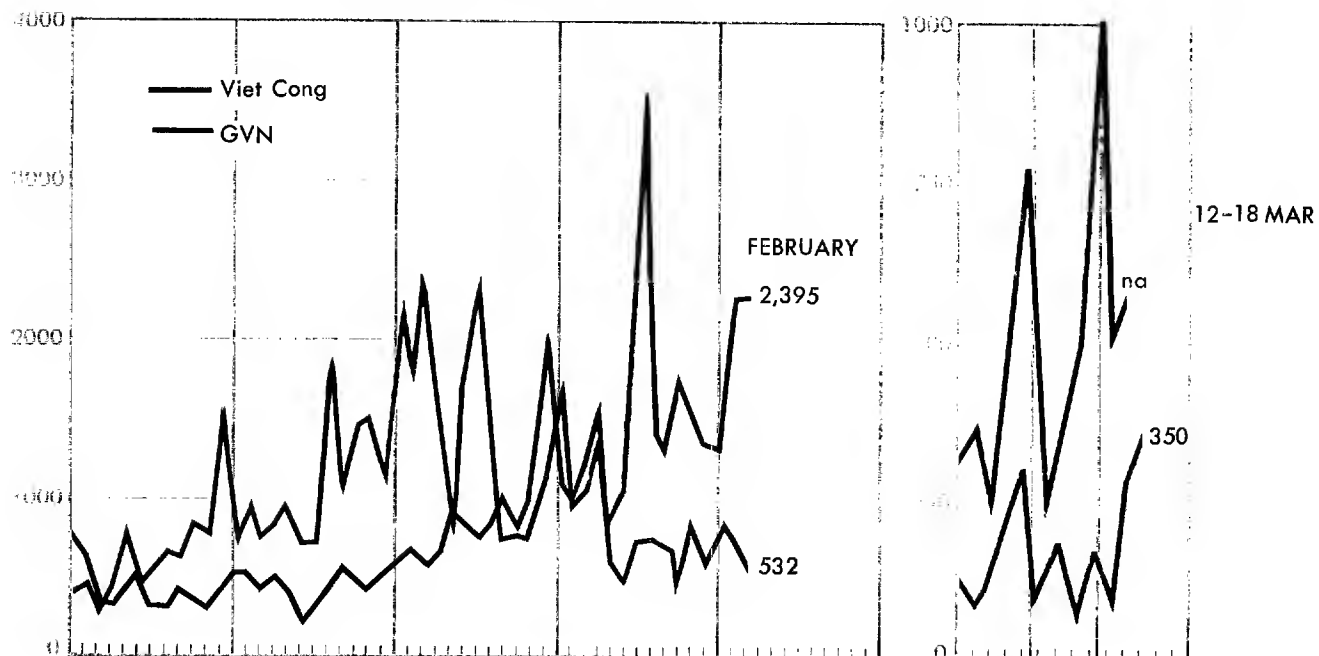
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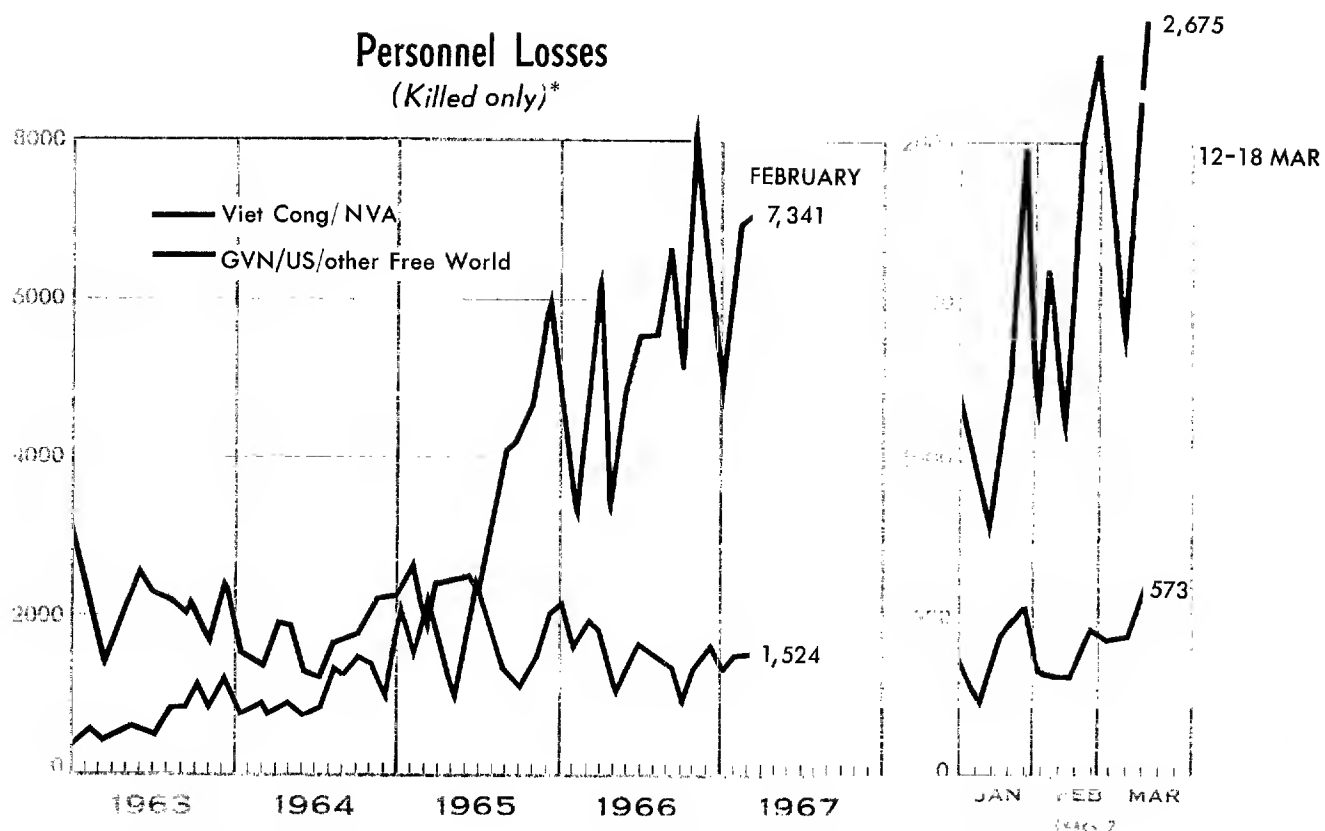
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Weapons Losses



Personnel Losses (Killed only)*



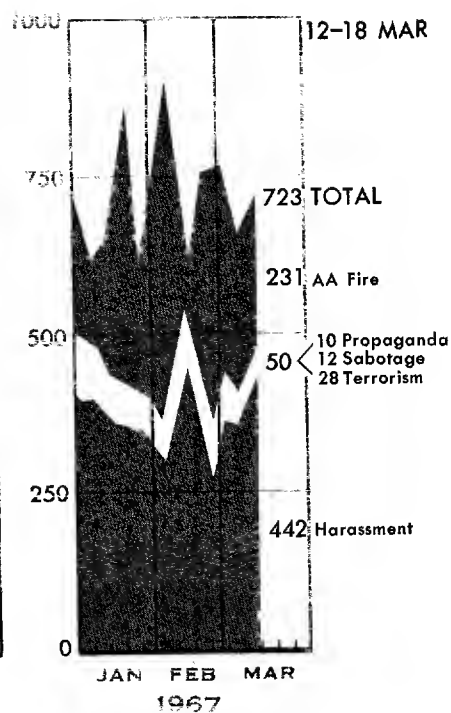
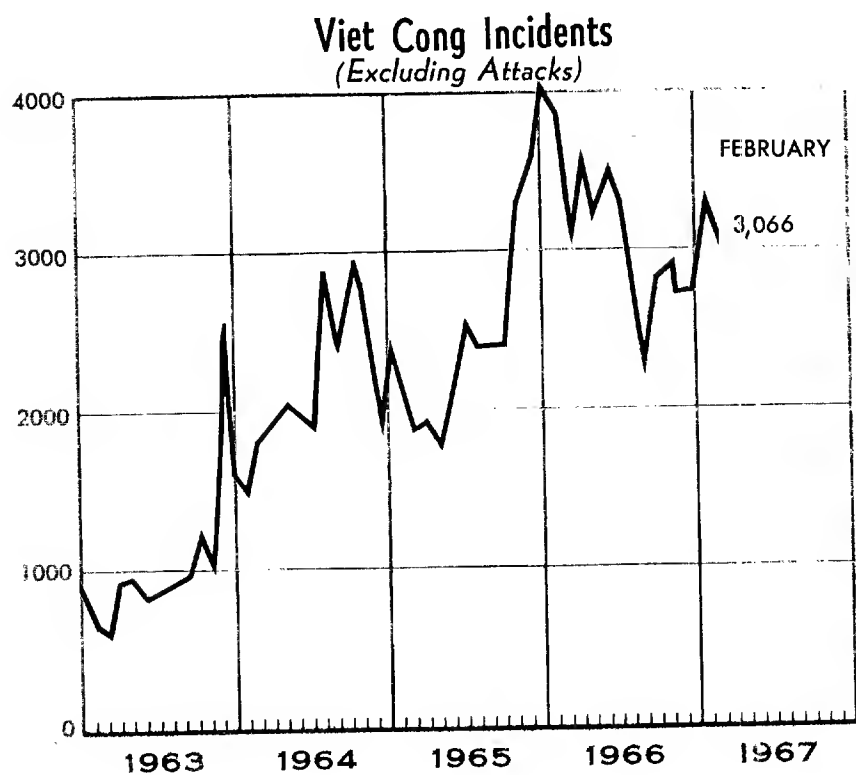
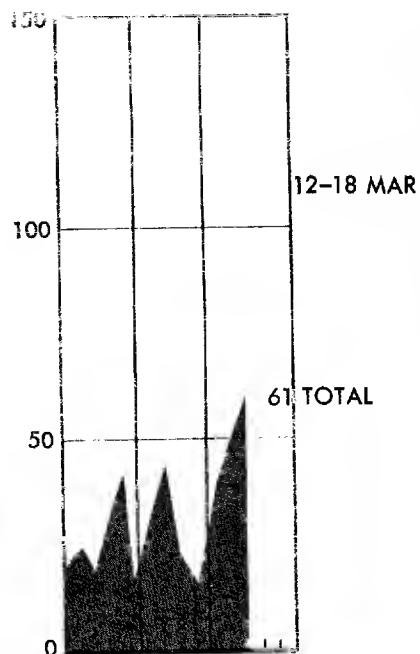
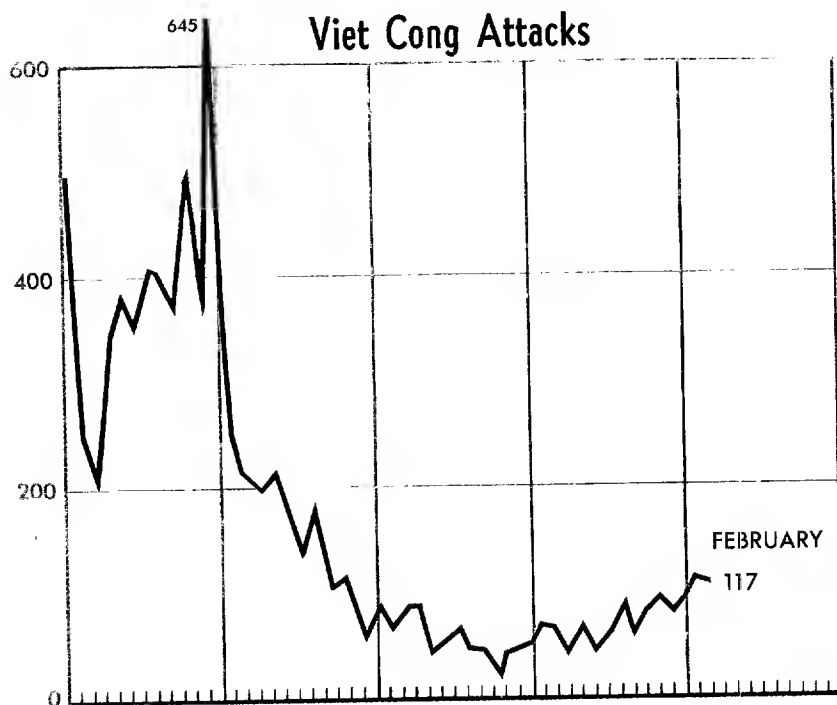
US Casualties to Date: Killed 7,878 Wounded 45,967 Captured 145 Missing 384

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*Due to a change in the reporting of personnel losses, beginning 12 February 1967 the weekly figure will represent only personnel killed.

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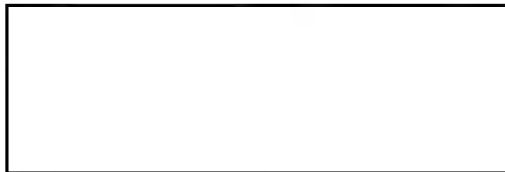
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